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BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND THE PULPIT.

I.

Is Biblical Criticism a proper subject for pulpit treatment? This is the question I am asked to answer, and I may say at once that my answer is No. But before proceeding to justify that answer I should like to make two points clear.

In the first place my objection applies to the discussion of the subject on ordinary occasions only. I am far from desiring to lay down a hard-and-fast rule, and declare such discussion taboo always and under all circumstances. I should be the last to affirm that Biblical Criticism is an unclean thing whose intrusion would inevitably defile the sanctuary. There are occasions doubtless when the preacher may properly take it as his theme, inasmuch as some passing event has, for the moment, fixed the attention of his congregation upon it. The pulpit could hardly have been silent two or three years ago, for example, when Prof. Friedrich Delitzsch's famous lectures gave rise to the "Babel und Bibel" controversy, of which the echoes are still clinging to the air. Whether that utterance, which seemed to the calm observer to say little that had not been said many times already, would have attracted such widespread attention if the intervention of "the mailed fist" had not lent the incident an adventitious piquancy, may well be doubted. But that it did attract widespread attention is certain. The newspapers were full of it. The ordinary man breakfasted on it. And the Jewish cleric who made it the topic of his Sabbath discourse was strictly within his rights, for probably it was what his congregation expected and desired him to do. I say "probably," because I am not quite certain. I preached on the incident at the time, but cannot affirm positively that my hearers were interested.

There was certainly no protest, as far as I know, against the introduction of the subject; but, on the other hand, I heard no expression of satisfaction at its introduction. My reason for referring to this point the sequel will show.

Mr. Montefiore has somehow conceived the idea that we Jewish ministers have entered into an informal conspiracy to keep criticism out of the pulpit. He almost charges us with obscurantism in this matter. Thus on page 10 of a published sermon on "Great is Truth, and Strong above all Things," delivered to the Jewish Religious Union last March, he says, "The condition of affairs in our own religious community is not without alarming elements. In official Judaism, the newer truths of science, history, and criticism are almost completely ignored. . . . In the synagogue, a policy of silence and abstention is still pursued. The young are taught, and, so far as I know, our budding ministers are trained, as they might have been trained and taught eighty years ago, before Darwin or Colenso. This is surely serious. The divorce between officialism and truth is becoming greater in each decade, and the results of that divorce are also becoming more serious. Specious arguments are used about not disturbing the innocent faith of uneducated persons, about preserving unity in Judaism . . . about all things under heaven except one. And that one omitted argument or subject is: 'What do we owe to truth?'"

It is a formidable indictment; is it well-founded? Let us have the truth by all means; but about all things and all men—even about the clergy. Mr. Montefiore thinks that "in the synagogue, a policy of silence and abstention is still pursued." I cannot understand how he has come by the notion. In my synagogue, sermons have been preached from time to time in which the critical standpoint has been frankly adopted. Literary criticism, historical criticism, scientific criticism—all have been used in dealing with the Bible. I cannot claim to have delivered many of those discourses; but the fact remains that they have been

delivered. What is done inside the synagogue by "orthodox" ministers, I am unable to say. But, outside it, their attitude is anything but obscurantist. One instance, and that the most convincing, seeing that it is furnished by the head of the Anglo-Jewish hierarchy, will suffice to establish my point. Challenged to disavow the Hampstead "Symposium" on Biblical Criticism, the Chief Rabbi spoke, in reply, to the following effect at the last distribution of prizes to the students of Jews' College :—" We do not live in a monastery from which the literature of the world is shut out, and placed on an *index librorum prohibitorum*. . . . It is the main object of the studies which the pupils of this institution receive here to give them the intellectual and spiritual equipment that should steel them against every doubt, and fortify them with strong and convincing arguments. We do not desire to send out into the world a band of conceited obscurantists out of touch with modern thought and out of sympathy with modern needs. The so-called Higher Criticism must of necessity form a branch of the studies within the walls of this College¹."

This is a notable utterance, and it effectually disposes of the charge preferred by Mr. Montefiore against the representatives of "official Judaism" in this country.

Secondly, I would say that my answer to the question with which I started is in no wise influenced by my personal views as to the truth or the falsehood of the Critical position. What I am concerned with is the *expediency*, under ordinary circumstances, of introducing the subject into the Sabbath sermon. My opinions about the Higher Criticism are pretty well known. At least I should like to think so, for I have expressed them in my last published book. "There can be no question," I there say, "that, like every new idea, the Critical Theory has been carried to undue lengths, and we shall do well to be on our guard against many of its developments. But the soundness of the Theory itself is unaffected by the improper

¹ *Jewish Chronicle* for May 19, 1905.

uses to which it has sometimes been put. . . . No one can read the Pentateuch without perceiving that its sacred fabric is woven out of many and diverse threads. Even those who are unable to discern two independent accounts of the Creation in the first and second chapters of Genesis respectively, cannot possibly fail to see that there are two distinct versions of the Ten Commandments in the Pentateuch, one in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, the other in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy¹."

With the fundamental thesis of Criticism on its literary side I am thus seen to be in agreement. That I adopt its standpoint on historical and scientific questions is no less evident. "We must be prepared," I say, "to meet in the Bible with partial and even diverse representations of religious truth and with allegories and legends. The Bible is not a book about science or any other branch of profane knowledge. In regard to scientific matters it reflects only the knowledge of the age in which each writer lived²."

I call attention to these statements not because of their novelty, for they have been anticipated, as I have been at the pains to show, by the utterances of eminent Jewish teachers of past ages, but in order to make my position clear on the question immediately before us. I am on the side of the critics in their general conclusions. But, in spite of this, I am with those who deprecate the discussion, as a general rule, of critical topics in the pulpit. It is now time to give my reasons.

1. The ordinary Sabbath congregant does not want such subjects discussed, even from the conservative standpoint. Indeed, he does not much care for controversy of any kind. He goes to synagogue to pray—to pray, that is to say, in the larger sense of the expression, which includes meditation. He wants to commune with his own heart and be still. He wants—though he may not formulate the need so

¹ *Judaism as Creed and Life*, pp. 25, 27.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 20, 23.

clearly—to gain a firmer grip on the real meaning and significance of life, to get the true perspective, so that the worries and disappointments which have loomed so large during the week may fall back into their proper place in his thoughts. This is no mere guess-work of mine, but sober truth. It represents what many a congregant has told me about his personal needs. “I go to synagogue on Sabbath to reflect”—that is the phrase. What it means is clear enough. It implies a temper which has little tolerance for discussions, and none for Criticism. Here are people who long to be quiet, whose one desire is to be let alone; will the debate of burning questions satisfy that desire? They would be shown how to live their lives; they would be heartened for the great fight; what help will they get from learned disquisitions about JE and P? This is what they feel. The Biblical critic deems them foolish and guilty of bad taste. Fancy their not wanting to hear about JE and P, or about Gunkel’s latest theory! This will never do; they must be enlightened. But why? First of all, we are told, for the sake of truth itself, which is a sacred thing, and which it is our duty to communicate irrespective of consequences; and, secondly, for the sake of the greater vitality which the personal Judaism of many a man will gain from the dissemination of truth. But, assuming—it is a very large assumption—that all the conclusions of Criticism are true, is the duty of declaring the truth absolute? Are there not circumstances which dispense us from the obligation? Some stern moralists think so. Mr. Bradley, for example. “There are duties,” he says, “above truth-speaking, and many offences against morality which are worse, though they may be less painful, than a lie. Homicide may be excusable, rebellion in the subject and disobedience in the soldier all morally justifiable, and every one of them clear breaches of categorical imperatives, in obedience to a higher law. All that it comes to is this (and it is, we must remember, a very important truth), that you must never break a law of duty to please yourself,

never for the sake of an end not duty, but only for the sake of a superior and overruling duty¹."

Conceding that suppression of the truth is to be placed in the same category as lying, I ask, Does not the case before us come within the rule thus laid down—a rule which the critic himself respects every day in the reticence he observes when imparting knowledge to his children, or in his concealment of her danger from a stricken wife or daughter? The ordinary Sabbath worshipper, with his simple yet imperious needs, with his touching plea for repose, deserves to have his wants respected. His peace of mind, his happiness, are important enough to justify our withholding the truth from him, even if we are sure that we have got it beyond the slightest chance of mistake. And the critic can scarcely be said to have that certitude.

But we are told that truth assuredly benefits its possessor. The people perish, we are warned, for lack of knowledge. "The longer the ministers of a religion are not allowed to officially speak about the newer conquests of truth, the greater will be the number of those who will become alienated from or indifferent to the religion of their fathers, the larger the number of those who will think Judaism a mere religious curiosity and anachronism, incapable of change or transformation²." But however true this may be generally, it has no application to the particular case under discussion. We are thinking exclusively of the ordinary Sabbath worshipper, and he surely is in no danger of becoming "alienated" or "indifferent." His attachment to the ancestral religion is unquestionably strong, seeing that he is a synagogue-goer, and a Sabbath observer to boot. No; he does not need the help of the critics, and therefore ought not to have it thrust upon him. Others may possibly have recourse to it with advantage—those actually estranged from the synagogue, the "intellectuals" as they take pride in considering themselves, the emanci-

¹ *Ethical Studies*, p. 142.

² *Sermon on Great is Truth*, p. 11.

pated ; but for them there are the reviews, and the Jewish Religious Union, and Hampstead "Symposia." They can drink of the Pierian spring to their hearts' content. Not one word would I say to deter them. Why should I, seeing that I have drunk at the same source? Let the inquirers be free to inquire. But let my little band of Sabbath worshippers have their freedom too—freedom from discussions that would disturb their Sabbath peace. They may be called fossils, anachronisms, "moth-eaten angels" as Philipps Brooks is said to have styled some ultra-orthodox old ladies of his congregation. No matter. They are on the safe side. They have faith, hope, religion ; can Criticism give them more? For none save the most fanatical critic will contend that Criticism is an end in itself, that Scriptural vivisection is the whole duty of man. Its sole justification is that it may haply help to bless human lives.

2. The Sabbath worshipper is not interested in Biblical Criticism. I go a great deal among my flock, and I can hardly recall an occasion when the subject has formed the topic of conversation. Immortality, Sabbath observance, the Synagogue Service, Jewish separatism, Zionism—yes. These questions do exercise the average mind ; Criticism does not. I am sorry to have to say this, for I know it will wound the *amour propre* of the critics. But "great is truth and it shall prevail," as the critics themselves take care to impress upon us. Of Criticism it may be said that it pleases those who like such things. For other people it possesses no attractions. Some of them know nothing, and want to know nothing, about it. For others, more thoughtful, it has no actuality. They see clearly enough that the authority of the Bible is purely intrinsic, resting upon its appeal to the conscience and the heart. Its science may be primitive ; its books may be compilations ; some of its history may be legend. But its truth remains unaffected, for its teachings about God and Duty remain unaffected. Suppose there were twenty Isaiahs, is the sublimity of the Prophecies diminished by the smallest

fraction? This is what people think, and this is why Criticism is for them an idle beating of the air. Shall we preachers refuse to recognize the fact? The Pulpit is voted dull even now; why lend greater colour to the charge by discoursing on a question that no one cares two pins about? It is possible for a preacher to be too new as well as too old; he may be too much ahead of his hearers, as well as too much behind them, or above them. In either case he is uninteresting. And this obviously holds good whichever attitude he takes up towards Criticism. If he attacks its conclusions he is wrong, because he is gratuitously disrespectful to an important movement of thought. If he champions them he is also wrong, for he forces unpalatable doctrine down the throats of his hearers. In the one case he plays at ninepins; in the other he uses his congregation as a *corpus vile* to experiment upon.

Let Mr. Montefiore and his school be content. They have the lecture-room and the Press at their command; why sigh for the pulpit, or desire to win over the handful of more or less earnest souls that sit under it? What ordinary congregations need even in these days is not critical but constructive preaching. They do not want the last thing in philosophy or science. They do not want intellectual subtleties, or a cinematograph of the preacher's own doubts and mental balancings of *pros* and *cons*. What they do want is a plain, simple message which, because it comes from the heart, goes straight to the heart. It is possible that, later on, the average man will be more interested in critical problems than he is at present. The day may come when they will read the Law in the synagogue, not from the old-world parchment scroll, but from a "rainbow Bible"! But that day is a long way off. Until it does come, let us leave the Sabbath worshipper in peace, nor even

"With shadow'd hint confuse

A life that leads melodious days."

MORRIS JOSEPH.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since the above was written I have been permitted to read Mr. Montefiore's article, and have only to add the following observations:—

That the "results," as distinct from the "processes" of Criticism may properly tincture a sermon I freely admit. But Mr. Montefiore evidently wants more than this. The Judaism which is fashioned by Criticism must be shown, he says, to be "truer and better than the old." But how is this to be done except by a formal exposition of the new Judaism and an explanation and a justification of the processes by which it has been evolved? This is something more than a mere utilization of results. It is highly controversial and disturbing. And it is just this to which the ordinary Sabbath worshipper strongly objects.

And is the justification of the new Judaism as vital a necessity as Mr. Montefiore believes? Criticism is *ex hypothesi* a judgment of the Bible. But latter-day doubt—Jewish doubt at any rate—is not chiefly centred in the Bible. It is mainly concerned with problems far larger and more fundamental than those raised by Criticism, problems that Criticism does not profess to touch. In my humble judgment Maimonides' Thirteen Articles are not the stumbling-block Mr. Montefiore imagines them to be. Doubtless there are many Jews nowadays who find it hard to accept them all in their literal significance. But of these only a minority, I think, need to be shown how they may keep their theological standpoint and still remain believing Jews. To afford them that enlightenment is unquestionably to do a great service both to them and to Judaism. But Mr. Montefiore's *Liberal Judaism* has accomplished the task in the case of the more advanced minds among them. The pulpit, for the reasons I have given above, is not, I submit, the place for attempting it. But those who need help and enlightenment, as I have said,

are the minority. Of those who cannot conscientiously accept Maimonides' Creed as it stands, the greater number have already made the necessary mental adjustment for themselves. "If," they say, "Moses did not write every word of the Pentateuch, his spirit at least informs it"; and so they can see the scroll elevated in the synagogue, and hear the words recited, "This is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel," without the slightest discomfort. And so with the other articles of the Creed. The dogma of the Immutability of the Law becomes for such persons the imperishability of the great religious and ethical principles of Mosaism, principles like the Divine Unity and Spirituality, on the one hand, and the Brotherhood of Man, on the other, which Criticism cannot shake because they are confessedly beyond its reach. In some such way people have come to regard Maimonides' scheme of belief. They deal with it themselves, each man in accordance with his intellectual and spiritual temperament and with the measure of his capacity. Some with a feeling for historical perspective take yet another line. They will argue that Maimonides, in putting forth his Thirteen Articles, spoke for himself only, and not for the Jewish Church, and that other teachers of equal authority formulated other schemes at variance with it and with each other. And so they will say that, since clearly none of these schemes is authoritative, it is possible to have a religion which does not absolutely coincide with any one of them and yet legitimately to call it Judaism. But, whichever class of thinkers we have in view, the point is that each man makes the needful reconciliation between the old and the new for himself. In the majority of cases outside help is superfluous. Criticism, whatever its implications, has less actuality for the average mind than the critics believe. Our young people have ceased to wonder—if they have ever wondered at all—whether Abraham is an historic character, or only the personification of a great ethnical movement, or how two variants of the Ten Commandments could have

been simultaneously delivered at Sinai, or whether David wrote the Psalms, or Isaiah his fortieth chapter. They are exercised about other and far deeper things—about the necessity of any Judaism whatsoever, about the sanctions of Duty, about the existence of God. Criticism cannot give them any assurance on these questions. You may modify your definition of Judaism, your notion of Duty, your conception of Deity, as the consequence of your critical attitude; but in the last resort you have to justify them to the intellect and the conscience exactly as the orthodox teacher has to justify his doctrine. And it is this justification, and the appeal to the heart which is its inevitable sequel, that constitute the essential part of the preacher's business, and upon the success of which the moral and religious life of his hearers largely depends.

In short, what is at stake is not Judaism, but Religion. Every Jew makes his own Judaism, with or without Criticism. What the preacher has to do is to help him to build up a stable religious life.

M. J.

II.

SHOULD BIBLICAL CRITICISM BE SPOKEN
OF IN JEWISH PULPITS?

THE question whether the investigations and results of Biblical criticism should be referred to in Jewish pulpits is not so simple or so easily answered as at first thinking it might appear. A comprehensive Yes, at least, is less possible than a comprehensive No.

First of all, it is fairly obvious that the question is likely to be answered differently by those who believe that the main results of criticism are false, by those who believe that they are true, and by those who honestly have not made up their minds.

For instance, take the case of a minister in an orthodox synagogue who believes that the results of criticism are wholly false. He fears that some of his flock may be led astray by the false, but specious arguments of the critics. Why should he not now and again allude to those arguments, and, so far as this may seem possible to him within the limits of a sermon, convincingly refute them? The creed which he recites and in which he believes declares that all Leviticus, no less than nearly all Deuteronomy, was written down by Moses. Why should he not attempt to show doubting men and women that this cardinal dogma of orthodox Judaism—the dogma by which it must stand or fall—is wholly and completely true?

The case of the minister who believes that the main results of criticism are true is far more difficult. It is the only one with which I need concern myself; the only one perhaps about which I have a right to say a word.

The "case" is difficult mainly because one has to distinguish and divide. There is only one criticism with which

we have to deal, and its main results are well known. But there are many Judaisms, and the question is different, or must be answered differently, in each of them. Broadly speaking, there are three Judaisms—at least for our present purpose. On the extreme right there is genuine orthodox Judaism, which, I take it, does not demand less from its followers, as regards faith, than a sincere belief in the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides. It is not easy, I admit, at the present time to get official representatives of orthodox and traditional Judaism to speak up and out, and when they do so they are often called rude or bigoted or other unfavourable names; it is not easy to get them to tell us quite simply and fully what the faith of traditional and orthodox Judaism (apart from its practice) includes and involves: I may therefore be mistaken; and if I am mistaken, my whole subsequent argument is vitiated. But till I am better informed I must assume that orthodox Judaism accepts and proclaims the dogmas of the Thirteen Articles in a natural and not in a sublimated and explained away sort of sense. This, then, is one Judaism, and at the opposite end of the scale, on the extreme left, there stands the thorough-going Reform Judaism of America. Between these two Judaisms there are doubtless several others. For simplicity's sake I will, however, class them together, and call them In-between Judaism, as if they were not many but one.

Now, as I have not myself yet been in America, and only know of the conditions obtaining there from reading and conversation, I am very liable to make mistakes. But I believe that there are a large number of "Reformed" synagogues in America where the results of criticism are as much assumed and as generally accepted as they are among Unitarian churches in England. In these congregations you cannot give "offence" to anybody by asserting that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, because nobody believes that he did. The literal accuracy of the statements made in Exodus xix is not

part of the general belief. To speak of the legends of the books of Genesis or Exodus excites no surprise or perplexity. A Judaism has been fashioned or developed which accepts these "results" of criticism, and does not fight shy of them. The children are, I believe, taught in the religious classes on critical lines, such "lines," for example, as I have roughly indicated myself in the "Bible for Home Reading."

Now to the ministers of such a Judaism the question whether Biblical criticism and its results should be referred to in the pulpits is tolerably meaningless. It is at any rate uninteresting. A man may reasonably enough say: "Critical discussions are unsuited to the pulpit. Sermons must be edifying. They must not be essays. They must speak of goodness and sin, of the higher life and the future life, of duty and desire, of ideals and aspirations; not whether the laws of Leviticus were written down in the seventh or the fifth century B.C., or whether there were two Isaiahs or twenty." And so on. But the "Reform" minister would say this, as the Unitarian minister in England may say it, because his religion is independent of criticism, or because, from another point of view, it squares with and includes it. His sermons may not *discuss* "results" of criticism, but they will *assume* them. Between him and his congregation there is agreement and understanding: their religion as well as his is independent of Biblical criticism and of the miraculous. Why, then, needs the preacher to dwell *persistently* upon these subjects? They are rather literary, philosophical, archaeological, or historical, than religious. There is nothing spiritual or uplifting in the statement: Moses did not write the Pentateuch. The preacher will not ignore "criticism" if it fits in with the subject of his discourse, but he will not harp upon it. Like his Unitarian colleague, he is perfectly comfortable and free.

So much for the Reformed synagogues of the extreme left. And now for the Orthodox synagogues of the extreme

right. It seems to me that in these synagogues criticism can only be referred to by those ministers who honestly disbelieve in it. Their case was alluded to at the outset. A compromise between orthodox Judaism and the results of criticism seems to me impossible. In theory and embodiment, in faith and practice, orthodox Judaism is the negation of criticism; if the results of criticism are true, orthodox Judaism (as a whole) is false, and vice versa. To deny these propositions seems to involve an ignorance or misapprehension of either criticism or orthodox Judaism or both.

We might devise the following antithesis: In "reformed" synagogues it is unnecessary to discuss approvingly the results of criticism; in orthodox synagogues it is impossible. I do not think there is much exaggeration in either branch of this antithesis.

Thus for a whole quantity of synagogues the question is disposed of. It is disposed of for all synagogues in England (except, at most, three) and for a heap of synagogues in America. Before thinking the matter out it seemed to me interesting and important. But I am bound to confess that it now seems to me hardly one or the other, for in so very many instances (either for one reason or the other) it is quite devoid of actuality. It is not a question of practical politics.

There are, however, to be considered the synagogues of In-between Judaism. These are synagogues which do not accept the creed of Maimonides, but which are neither clearly "reform" nor clearly "orthodox." For these synagogues, which may possibly come down on either side of the fence, which may develop, that is into either orthodoxy or reform, the question has more importance and actuality. There are, I fancy, a few synagogues of this kind in Germany, and there are some, I fancy, in America. There are very few elsewhere—not more than three, for instance, in all England, and none that I am aware of in France. In the large majority of German synagogues,

whether they have an organ or no organ, and much German, little German, or no German in the liturgy, the orthodox beliefs of Judaism are, I fancy, assumed. In them no preacher may say that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, or that the narratives in Exodus are legendary. Whatever the beliefs of the laymen may be who pay for the *upkeep* of the synagogues, the *teaching* in them has to be orthodox as regards the Pentateuch. There is, indeed, a minority. I have before me a small but excellent collection of sermons by Dr. Coblenz, rabbi in Bielefeld (1904). In a sermon preached in 1896 at the festival of Passover, the results of criticism as touching the Pentateuch are freely assumed, and the miracles are freely surrendered. Dr. Coblenz urges that the value of the Bible is thereby increased. The sermon is so unusual in a Jewish pulpit that I will interrupt the thread of my own argument to quote a few salient passages.

“Wollen wir die Bibel recht verstehen und würdigen, dann müssen wir sie in ihrem Entwicklungsgange, in ihrer Entstehungsgeschichte zu erfassen versuchen. Gerade der Pentateuch bekundet uns so recht bezeichnend den Werdegang der biblischen Bücher. Denn er ist nicht das Werk eines Einzelnen, nicht im Laufe weniger Jahre entstanden, sondern er ist der Niederschlag der Entwicklung, die die israelitische Gemeinschaft im Laufe vieler Jahrhunderte durchgemacht hat; er ist das Geschichtsbuch Israels; aus ihm spricht die Stimme des *ganzen* Volkes. Nicht Mose hat die Thora verfasst, nicht *seinem* Geiste sind die darin niedergelegten Gesetze entsprungen, nicht *seine* Hand hat ihren Wortlaut aufgezeichnet, sondern erst viele, viele Jahrhunderte nach seinem Tode haben Männer des jüdisch-israelitischen Volkes sie niedergeschrieben und dadurch verewigt, was im Volke gelebt, was von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht sich fortgeerbt als heilige mündliche Überlieferung, oder was sich im Laufe der Zeit aus dem Volke heraus entwickelt hat. Wie einfach und ungezwungen erklären sich bei dieser Auffassung all die wunderbaren und aussergewöhnlichen Begebenheiten, von denen die Thora uns berichtet! Sie sind dann nichts weiter als der poetische Glanz, mit welchem die dichtende Volksseele die Geschichte der Urzeit verklärt; sie sind liebliche Sagen, mit denen die rege, nie rastende Phantasie des Volkes das Wirken seiner grossen Männer geschmückt hat.

“Doch mancher mag hier zweifelnd fragen: sollte wirklich diese Auffassung des biblischen Wortes geeignet sein, die heilige Schrift uns lieb und wert zu machen? Wird nicht im Gegentheil der Glorienschein dadurch zerstört, mit dem das Buch der Bücher stets umgeben war? Ich halte diese Befürchtung nicht für berechtigt. Mir will vielmehr scheinen, als ob gerade durch eine derartige Auffassung der biblischen Wunder unsere Thora nur gewinnen könnte. Denn der Sagenkreis der heiligen Schrift ist ein schönes Zeugnis für die poetische Gestaltungskraft unserer Väter. Wir dürfen uns als Juden dieses Sagenkranzes ebenso freuen, wie wir uns als Deutsche der lieblichen Sage vom Kyffhäuser und anderer Sagen freuen, in denen deutsche Dankbarkeit und deutsche Treue sinnigen Ausdruck finden.

“Und nun nehmet diesen poetischen Schmuck hinweg, befreit den biblischen Stoff von den zahlreichen Wundern, die wir erst jetzt recht zu würdigen verstehen, und welch’ reicher Schatz grosser Gedanken bleibt uns dann noch übrig! Welche Fülle herrlicher Gesetze und unvergleichlicher Lehren, die das Buch der Bücher uns bietet, und die vorbildlich bleiben werden für alle Zeiten und Geschlechter! Auf diesen Gesetzen vor allem beruht der sittliche Wert der Bibel, und dieser Wert wird noch wesentlich erhöht durch das Bewusstsein, dass die Gesetze nicht von Mose herrühren, sondern aus dem Volke heraus sich entwickelt haben und im Laufe der Jahrhunderte allmählich entstanden sind.

“Wie ganz anders klingt es doch, wenn wir sagen können: Israel selbst hat diese Lehren geschaffen und nachher im Buche der Bücher festgelegt! Nicht Mose, sondern der jüdische Volksgeist hat den Gott-einheitsgedanken geprägt und jenes grosse Wort gesprochen: ‘Liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst; liebe den Fremdling wie dich selbst.’ Was wir in unserer Thora lesen, das ist das lebendig gewordene israelitische Volksbewusstsein, das ist der Niederschlag dessen, was im Volke Jahrhunderte lang geübt wurde, und woran jeder Einzelne mitgearbeitet hat. *Mag Israel dabei immerhin von den Kulturen anderer Völker beeinflusst worden sein — kein Denker wird das bestreiten — das eigentümliche Gepräge unserer Lehre, der reine sittliche Monotheismus des Judentums ist unser eigenstes Werk!* Auf welch’ hoher sittlicher Stufe muss doch ein Volk gestanden haben, das solche Anschauungen aus sich selbst heraus entwickeln konnte in einer Zeit, in welcher die Nationen noch in Heidentum und Götzendienst versunken waren und Hartherzigkeit und Lieblosigkeit gegen Fremde lehrten und übten. Ja, mit freudigem Herzen und mit stolzem Selbstgefühl bekennen wir: die Gesetze der Bibel sind unsere Gesetze, sind Fleisch von unserem Fleisch und Bein von

unserem Bein; und all die bedeutsamen Lehren, welche durch die Tochterreligion sich die Welt erobert haben, sind dem israelitischen Geiste entsprossen, die israelitische Volksseele hat sie geschaffen."

Personally I think that Dr. Coblenz's arguments slur over the implications of criticism a little cavalierly. But their interest and value can hardly be denied. And it is pleasant to think that though they were spoken in 1896, and have doubtless been often repeated since, Dr. Coblenz is still rabbi in Bielefeld. In his synagogue, and possibly in some others, the question whether the results of Biblical criticism shall be alluded to in sermons has actuality. And for synagogues which are so situated, and for ministers who may speak their minds, the following few suggestions may be offered.

Though it may be freely allowed that the subject matter of criticism is neither ethical nor spiritual, it is nevertheless the fact that criticism has religious implications. Judaism is greatly affected according as the "results" of criticism are assumed to be false or assumed to be true. It is a very different religion one way or the other. Obligations of belief and practice are imposed upon us if we accept the Thirteen Articles, from which, if we reject some of them, we are free. One's whole conception of God and of his relation to man, one's whole conception of the growth and development of religion, and of the destiny of Judaism, are profoundly modified according as one accepts or rejects the results of criticism *and the implications* of those results. How can one put all this aside if one believes in it? It would be only a maimed and imperfect, and therefore an inaccurate and misleading view of religion and of God which one could put before one's congregants if, believing in the results and implications of criticism, one must keep silence about them in the pulpit. For it is not the *process* but the *results* about which one wants to talk. It is not a question of scientific discussion of dates and authorships, of philosophic and historic arguments for and against miracles. For elaborate scientific discussions the pulpit is,

indeed, unfitted. But to avoid all subjects in which the results and implications of criticism come in is a very different thing. That would mean that the preacher could not fully set forth his mind upon matters of urgency and moment. He must often halt and pull up short. By suppression of the whole truth he will give impression of untruth. As, for instance, when he talks of Abraham it will appear as if he thought him as much an historical character as the Duke of Wellington, and the events recorded of him as historic as the battles of the Peninsula War. Two things must be shown, and both require freedom. First it must be shown what the implications of criticism are; how widely a Judaism which accepts differs from a Judaism which denies them. It must be shown that this newer Judaism is truer, better, larger, freer than the old; how it is less hampered by difficulties, not compelled to defend the indefensible, to justify the imperfect, to call black white, and inconsistencies consistent. And, on the other hand, it must be shown that this newer Judaism is Judaism still, that it deserves the name, and that it intends to keep it. If the pulpit is not the spot in which all this must be shown, I do not know what place is.

It may be argued that while you must not in the pulpit say anything you do not believe, you need not say all you do believe. In the In-between synagogues, which are the only ones where the subject can or need be discussed, there will presumably be a mixed audience. Some of the congregants will like and agree with what you say; others will not. Some will belong to the left; others, and perhaps the most regular worshippers, will belong to the right. The former you will satisfy; the latter you will offend, hurt, agitate, shock, and annoy. What is the good of this? Why not speak that which pleases *all* parties? Why needlessly cause strife and dissension? It is an old argument. It has its force. But it has its dangers. It is not always well to prophesy smooth things; not always well to cry, "Peace, peace." It may be bad to shock a few

conservative minds. And the tender consciences of all, whether young or old, male or female, must be respected. But it may be of still greater moment to strengthen the weak, to confirm the doubting. It may be of still greater importance to give men and women sometimes the strong meat by which they can live. If there are some who for lack of this leave the synagogue and drift away from Judaism, may not the fault, in some cases, be within the synagogue and not wholly in themselves? It cannot be said that the issues of criticism are of small importance. They can only be ignored with peril. Some misunderstand them. Reform Judaism has many enemies. The orthodox on the one hand, many outsiders upon the other, deny its cohesive power, its right to be called "Judaism," its religious efficiency. A brief allusion, a casual and unreasoned optimism, will not suffice to refute their arguments. Criticism does not deal so tenderly with Judaism, nor is it so esoteric and obscure a subject that it is easy to live and teach as if it did not exist. A small patch upon the old bulwarks will not serve our turn. Of such inadequate defenders shall it not be said when the wall is fallen, "Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?"

Preachers have to remember that the minds of their congregants must be dealt with as well as their hearts. Even for the sake of variety it is good to preach occasionally sermons which speak to the intellect rather than to the emotions. At the present time the questions raised by criticism are in the air. They are alluded to in magazine articles; they are discussed in conversation. The intellectual conscience, especially of the younger men and women, is being stirred. They are no longer willing or able to accept without question the creeds which satisfied their parents. Moral, critical, and even metaphysical puzzles confront them. They ask for a reasonable faith; it is for the preacher to point out to them how they may obtain it. They will not go to him in his private study until he has spoken to them from the pulpit. How is the old

religion to be fitted to the new requirements? Can we still be Jews by creed as well as by race? Such are the far-reaching problems which assail many a young man and woman, and many an adult. Among these problems those of Biblical criticism take a prominent place. It is for the preacher who is also a teacher to help such persons to attain a Judaism which shall reconcile the old with the new.

Thus in the "In-between" synagogues, if the preacher believes in the results of criticism and may freely speak his mind, the arguments for speech seem to me far more cogent than the arguments for silence. Nor need speech imply crude, violent, and offensive utterances. There need be no evasion. The preacher's whole mind may be expressed upon the most important and far-reaching problems. And yet here too the adage *fortiter in re, suaviter in modo* may be fitly and constantly applied.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.

POSTSCRIPT.

When Mr. Joseph and I planned the friendly debate contained in the two preceding articles, we thought it might be interesting if each read the arguments of the other, and then commented on them in a postscript. Mr. Joseph has given *his* postscript: here follows mine.

I cannot reply in detail to Mr. Joseph's article, otherwise I fear my postscript would be longer than my article. It will be seen that we are not really quite so far apart as it might have seemed, even though the one answers the question we both discuss in the negative, the other in the affirmative. No other Jewish minister in London could have ventured to write upon the subject of criticism as openly and frankly as Mr. Joseph has done; no other

could have gone so far in concessions to the critical point of view, or in meeting the results of criticism halfway. It is indeed something to belong to an "In-between" synagogue!

Mr. Joseph uses several very different arguments to support his main thesis that biblical criticism should not be discussed in the pulpit. First, we have the usual argument that one must not give offence, that one must not suggest doubts in pious minds where no doubts exist. The article closes with a familiar line from Tennyson which has its value. I have alluded to the relative justification of the argument in my own article, and need not further refer to it here.

Next comes the contention that people come to synagogue "to think," and this "thinking" apparently means that they "long to be quiet, to be let alone." Hence their repose must not be disturbed by anything which would upset their peaceful calm. "Burning questions" must not be alluded to in the pulpit. I fully admit that they need not be constantly discussed there. I fully admit that many sermons must be purely ethical; others must be concerned with those great and simple religious subjects which lie beyond "criticism." But if the minister be really free to speak (and Mr. Joseph asserts that he at least is), then a burning question which touches the supposed basis of Judaism, as Judaism has been conceived for two thousand years, should not, I think, be always and consistently avoided. People come to synagogue to think, it is said; well, let them have something to think about. It is true that during many sermons they *can* be (intellectually) "quiet"; they *are* "let alone." But is this *always* desirable? And is "to think" the same as "to be quiet" and "to be let alone"?

The third argument put forward by Mr. Joseph is of a totally different kind. In the second argument he had objected to discussions about criticism and its implications, because the pulpit must steer clear of "controversy" and

"burning questions." In the third argument he tells us that these subjects must be avoided because for most persons they have no interest. Criticism is a subject "which no one cares two pins about." So far from it being a "burning question," it is an extremely dull one. Mr. Joseph says he has found that this is so from personal experience. Why this statement should wound the *amour propre* of the critics I cannot conceive. I receive it with the utmost respect. It does not quite tally with my own experience, but then there may be special reasons for this difference. It is, I fully admit, a most important argument, and one to be most earnestly taken into account.

But now comes the most surprising thing of all. I might even call it the fourth argument, though it is perhaps more accurately described as a variety and explanation of the third. Why is criticism, with its results and its implications, uninteresting to so many persons? For two reasons. Some persons are frankly bored by it. "They know nothing, and want to know nothing about it." For them it is neither burning nor obvious. It is simply non-existent. These persons, then, are to be carefully suffered to continue in their ignorance. Their holy calm must not be disturbed. I am fain to confess that I should be inclined to be less tender to these uninterested ignoramuses. But we will pass them by, for the second reason is so far more interesting and important. Criticism to many persons has "no actuality." In other words, they are above it. They are, in fact, in the same position as the persons in the reform synagogues of America, or in the Unitarian churches at home, to whom I have already alluded. These persons "see clearly enough that the authority of the Bible is purely intrinsic, resting upon its appeal to the conscience and the heart. Its science may be primitive; its books may be compilations; some of its history may be legend. But its truth remains unaffected, for its teachings about God and Duty remain unaffected." [I suppose Mr. Joseph means *some of*, or *its*

highest, "teachings about God and Duty remain unaffected," for there are a great variety and diversity of "teachings" in the "Bible," and if we judge them by *intrinsic* authority only, we shall choose only the good, and reject the bad and the inferior.] Again, in the post-script Mr. Joseph assures us that even the young in these latter days are far beyond critical difficulties. *Their* doubts touch fundamentals "about the necessity of any Judaism whatsoever, about the sanctions of Duty, about the existence of God." We poor critics are very behindhand if we think that anybody cares about our problems or their results.

I cannot help feeling a little doubtful about these assertions. I feel astonished when I am told that so many persons have reached the critical result that "the authority of the Bible is purely intrinsic." In other words, the sanction of the Ten Commandments rests solely upon their religious excellence and their ethical merit. It does not rest upon the "legend" that they were spoken amid thunder and lightning by the very voice of God himself. I had fancied that the "sanction of duty" *was* dimmed when we are no longer able to believe that the *content* of duty is given us by an infallible guide—given to us, and recorded for us and for all time, in a religiously and ethically perfect code. I should have thought that if the "sanction of duty" be a question which "exercises" the minds of young Jews or Jewesses, this is just because they can no longer believe the simple faith of their parents about the Pentateuch and the Bible. And I should have thought that, if this be so, they cannot yet "clearly" see that the Bible *still* has an authority, though "intrinsic," and not extrinsic. Does not their very doubt about "the sanctions of Duty and the existence of God" show that they do *not* clearly realize this "intrinsic" authority, which *though* intrinsic and not extrinsic, has still its powerful word to say *for* the sanction of duty and *for* the existence of God?

Finally, Mr. Joseph seems to me to use rather too easy examples of criticism. And I too, I think, am to blame in that I use criticism in somewhat too extended a sense. I have, indeed, tried to indicate my meaning by speaking repeatedly of the *implications* of criticism. The "higher criticism" has primarily only to do with dates and authorities. It has nothing in itself to do with questions of fact and miracle. For instance, criticism might show that chapters xix and xx of the Book of Exodus constitute a compilation, written down five or six hundred years after the events they profess to describe. But it would not follow that the miracles they record did not happen; they might be wholly accurate from beginning to end. Nevertheless criticism of dates and authorships stands in close relation to the historical criticism of facts and stories. If Exodus xix and xx were written down by Moses, they are perhaps quite accurate transcripts of actual events; if they were written five or six hundred years after his time, they are almost certainly not. Hence the need to deal with the *implications* of criticism rather than with criticism itself.

Now what are the examples of critical results mentioned by Mr. Joseph? We hear of the two versions of the Ten Commandments, of the two independent accounts of the creation in Genesis, of the question whether "David wrote the Psalms, or Isaiah his fortieth chapter." I fully allow that we have advanced beyond these trifles, and that they do not greatly matter or concern us. But I do not think that the same can be said of the questions whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch, whether God gave to Israel for all time through Moses a perfect, homogeneous, and immutable law. We have also to remember that among the difficulties connected with the Bible are many moral questions of puzzling perplexity. If the authority of the Bible is "purely intrinsic," what are we to say about such laws, e. g. as Exod. xxi. 21, xxii. 18, or Deut. xx. 13-16? What sort of "appeal" do *they* make to the "conscience and the heart"? It is precisely because I feel that *through*

criticism and its implications we can be freed from these difficulties, even though it may be criticism which partially has raised them, because I believe that the old Judaism is confronted with moral and religious, as well as with merely literary and historic difficulties, which must, but which also (as I think) *can*, be solved, that I have urged it as one of the duties of those who share my views to show, both *in* the pulpit and outside it, that "the newer Judaism is truer, better, larger, and freer than the old."

C. G. M.